

BENNETT – SB 374

Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing to urge you to oppose SB 374. This is a bad bill with alarming presumptions and invasions into the rights of all Connecticut parents and parents-to-be. The supposed purpose of this bill considers ways to meet the mental health issues of a select number of troubled children, but SB 374 is not the answer to that need. There are serious problems in its approach to this situation.

The bill fails to define terms such as “behavioral health assessment” and “provider of assessment”.

The bill fails to provide an appeals process if the assessment is not appropriate.

The bill is totally subjective to unspecified definitions.

The bill does not provide for children’s refusal to participate or for provider’s refusal to participate.

Furthermore, the bill does not consider error rates of assessment or who may obtain access to assessment, nor does it state who will pay for the assessments.

In addition, this bill is so subjective, it takes a broad brush approach that indiscriminately places all children into the category of needing evaluation of behavioral health, while ignoring serious flaws in how we currently deal with children who demonstrate behavioral problems.

There are possible solutions to this situation without having to adopt a bill that unconstitutionally infringes on parents’ rights. There are even solutions that can be found without the legislature having to adopt a bill. Local school boards and parents should be free to work together to consider how best to meet the individual needs of their children and students.

Once again, I urge you to oppose and vote against SB 374.

Kathryn Bennett